

We Are CV Oral History Toolkit



Introduction:

Thank you for your interest in participating in the We Are CV Oral History project. Oral History is the collection and study of historical information by gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, places or events. Oral History allows for people of all ages to share pieces of their lives, and to talk about the sources of strength, connection, meaning and challenges throughout their lives. This toolkit was created in an attempt to help We Are CV ambassadors conduct oral history interviews, and contains sample questions, videography suggestions, and interview tips.

This toolkit will serve as a general guide for people that are interested in documenting the stories of others in our community; however interviewers should not depend solely on this document to conduct interviews, and should add/subtract interview questions as they see fit. We appreciate your interest in participating in this project, and may we continue to learn and grow as a community.

Kindly,

-Age Friendly CV Team

Sample Questions:



Childhood

1. Can you state your name, age, and where you were born?
2. What's your first, most vivid memory?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about your family?
4. How was your upbringing? Can you describe your neighborhood?
5. What big world events do you remember from the time you were growing up?
6. Did you have any heroes or role models when you were a child?

Young Adulthood

7. What did you do for a living?
8. How did you decide what you wanted to do with your life? How do you feel about that choice?
9. Did you ever get married? How old were you? Where did you get married? What was your wedding like? Can you describe them to me?
10. What memory stands out the most from your wedding?
11. What do you believe is the key to a successful marriage?

Young Adulthood (Continued)

12. How did you meet your significant other?

13. How would you describe your spouse? What do/did you admire most about them?

14. Did you ever have kids? When were they born?

15. How did you feel about raising your children? What was the best part? The hardest part?

16. What the best thing about being a parent? A grandparent?

17. What has been the most rewarding or gratifying experiences you've had and what made it so?

Identity

18. Right now, what are the more salient parts of your identity. How do you identify yourself?

19. What do you think are your three best qualities? Your three worst?

20. What do you think has stayed the same about you throughout life? What do you think has changed?

Present

21. What do you do for fun?

22. Who do you trust and depend on?

23. What things are most important to you now? Why?
24. What are some of the things you are afraid of?
25. What has been one of the most surprising things about aging?
26. How do you feel now about aging?
27. What's the hardest thing about growing older? The best thing?
28. Do you think about the future and make plans? What are your concerns for the future?
29. What do you look forward to now?
30. How is the world today different than the world you grew up in?

Legacy

31. What's your best piece of advice for living? If a young person came to you asking what's the most important thing for living a good life, what would you say?
32. How do you define a "good life" or a "successful life"?
33. What do you see as your place or purpose in life? How did you come to that conclusion?
34. What would you like your children and grandchildren to remember about you?

What equipment do I need?

Video camera

When possible use an external microphone to reduce echo or recording outside noises. (e.g., those on headphones/hands-free devices)

Video Taping Recommendations

Shoot in landscape (if using phone, film horizontally)

Have the subject take up the right or left third of the frame (i.e., don't put them in the middle of the shot)

Capture part of the subject's torso and all of their head (e.g., shoulders and above).

Check where your lighting sources are. Make sure the interview setting is well lit. Ideal lighting should face the subject, but not be in the way/in the shot.

If shooting outside, the best time to do so is roughly about an hour before sunset or sunrise.

Seek an interview setting in locations that are free of noise/distractions

Be mindful of background activity. Seek interview settings that aren't going to distract from the interview subject (one should avoid locations where there are going to be things going on in the background)

INTERVIEW FORMAT OPTIONS:

Traditional Method: The first way would be formatted with the camera facing both the interviewer and interviewee in one continuous shot. A great way of thinking about this would be imagining an interview on a television talk show. Benefits of this



method would be the ability to see physical cues (hand gestures, facial expressions etc.) from both the interviewee and interviewer. The downside is that it distracts the listener from solely focusing on the stories of the interviewee.

WatchCut Method: The second formatting option would only have the camera focusing on the interview subject. The interviewer will be behind the camera asking questions. The benefits of this as if they are discussing directly with the interview subject. A great way to visualize this format would be to visualize a typical YouTube interview/vlog.



Fishbowl method: The fishbowl method is more of a question generator method than it is a video formatting method. This option takes the interviewer out of the interview equation. Questions will be placed in a bowl



in front of the interviewee and they will randomly select questions, read them allowed and answer as they see fit directly to the camera. Benefits include increased suspense for both the audience and the interviewees since both parties will be wondering what will be asked.

MISCELLANEOUS INTERVIEW STRATEGIES AND TIPS:

- Make sure interviewees are aware that videos will be showcased in our We Are CV mobile oral history exhibit
- Make sure to have your interview subject sign the required consent waiver forms
- Make sure to set up the appointment for the interview, confirm the appointment, and keep the appointment
- Prepare a list of questions for the interview. You need not follow this list exactly; other questions will arise during the interview, but they will give a solid organization and cohesiveness to your interview.
- Remember you are speaking for a third person audience. Keep this in mind when conducting interviews with family members, there may be things that are obvious to both the interviewee and interviewer but not to folks that will be watching the videos later in the exhibits.
- If you are concerned about not being able to get your interview subject to open up during your interview, it might be helpful to send them the questions you are planning to ask before the interview date.



WE ARE *Chula Vista*

Thank you for your participation in the We Are CV Oral History Project. We look forward to hearing from you.

-Chula Vistas Age Friendly Communities Team

- If you have any additional questions please contact Nick Paúl at npaul@chulavistaca.gov